

NAVY MEDICINE LIVE

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Gratitude

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(ONE COMMENT)

By Capt. Bruce Meneley, commanding officer, NATO Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit, Kandahar, Afghanistan.



Role 3 staff members are presented certificates by leadership for being specifically mentioned in a letter thanking the staff for their life-saving efforts.

The staff at the NATO Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit in Kandahar, Afghanistan give their best efforts for every patient, regardless of nationality, service or religion. We often care for local Afghans for extended periods of time and can become quite attached to them, but once they leave we never hear about them again. Sometimes we might get an email from international aid workers letting us know how they are doing.

One young teenager we saw with a potentially devastating gunshot wound to the head made an amazing recovery. An

email said, "I wanted to come by and share with someone there, that all of the staff's great work- an incredible desire to live, heal and all of his family support (especially his brother) that he had during a critical time and trauma has resulted in an amazing miracle. At the compound a few days ago, I was meeting with our deputy director when I saw some children running (outside which is rare). When I asked who it was he told me and mentioned Little LaLa (this is what I call him) in the group of kids. I got up to go see him and they said, 'no we will call for him.' I cannot tell you the complete joy I had when he peeked around the door, I nearly didn't recognize him."

When we get these kinds of reports it is very uplifting for the staff.

We also want to know how our U.S. patients are doing after leaving here. The staff want to know they made a difference with them. But their memories are quickly replaced by another and another. But occasionally word will filter back about one of them, an email from someone that ran across a former patient, perhaps even a posting on Facebook. Sometimes, almost amazingly, we will get a letter from one of them or their family. Although they usually don't remember us because of the extent of their injuries, they know they were here by the remembrance book we send with every casualty with notes from staff and visitors. One former patient wrote in part, "There are many people who helped to save my life but all of you at Role 3 played a major role and I am eternally grateful ... I have a wife and 13-month old daughter that I am spending time with right now."

Family members will also sometimes write. One letter in part said, "I would like to commend

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and extend my sincere appreciation to you and your team that assisted after my son was severely wounded in the Province of Zabul in Afghanistan ... I was assured that my son was getting the best care possible at the NATO Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit in Kandahar, which was a great source of encouragement for us during these anxious moments. I am sincerely grateful for the selfless teamwork of your staff. I cannot express in words, my gratitude to these that serve our country and we appreciate the assistance of all involved during our time of need. Thank you."

When specific staff members are mentioned we present them with certificates and a copy of the letter.

During this holiday season we are grateful for our own health and the freedoms we enjoy. We are proud that when our warriors do come in harm's way we have the ability to make a difference in their lives and get them back to their families. We hope that you too are grateful, as we are, for their service to our country, which they provide on a daily basis to preserve our freedoms.

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What a great way to help others share in gratitude, not only those doing the helping but those receiving the help too! Not to mention what a great way to show the Afghan people the Americans do care!

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